

critical digest

505 FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y. 17, N. Y.
EL 5- 6894 T. M. KRAUS



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\$25 Year

This Week

Almost Crazy-Longacre
6/20. John S Cobb presents new revue with Ray Medford, Babe Hines, and James Shelton. Staged by Christopher Hewitt.

Morning's at Seven-
Cherry Lane 6/22. Proscenium Productions present revival of Paul Osborne play with June Walker starred. Warren Enters directed.

Future Dates

Arabian Nights-Jones
Beach 6/23...**Stage**
Struck-Bijou 7/7...
Fred Waring Pleasure
Time 1955-Ziegfeld 8/8.

Fall Dates

D'oly Carte-Shubert
9/27...**Maurice Chevalier-**
Playhouse 9/28...**A View**
of Bridge-Fulton 9/29...
Will Success Spoil Rook
Hunter-10/1...Diary of
a Young Girl 10/5...
Joyce Grenfel Requests
the Pleasure -Bijou 10/10
...Shepard's King-Yiddish
Art Theatre-Downtown National
10/10...The Lark-
10/12...Red Roses for Me
10/20...No Time for Comedy
10/20...Comedia Francaise-
Broadway 10/25...Janus-
Plymouth 11/1...Pipe Dream-
Shubert 11/30,

C.D. Summer Issues

C.D. will cover tryouts of new plays in Eastern summer theatres as reported in trade papers, local dailies, and via personal inspection.

Summer Tryout Dates

Better Mousetrap-Bucks County, Pa 7/18...Palm Tree in
Rose Garden-Poccano, Pa 7/18...Elue Denim-Westport 7/18...
Reluctant Flute-Hyde Park 7/19...The Geop-Oguinquit, Me,
8/8...Mighty Man is He-Falmouth 8/16...A View from the
Bridge-Falmouth 8/22...Devil's a Stranger-Reboth Beach, Del
8/22.

Strawhat Season Debuts

Merry Widow opened the seventh the seventh season of St. John Terrell's Music Circus at Lambertville, N.J. Herridge, Post, and Holl, Variety, both reported that dated romantic musical was given a lively production that pleased the audience. Lavish costumes, pleasant music and singing, romantic intrigue and absence of gray matter is the formula Terrell swears by, Post drama editor notes, and no one can say it doesn't work.

Guys and Dolls presented at Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn, N.J., is not up to its twin at the City Center, but does very nicely for Jerseyites tired of commuting, okayes Herridge, Post. Main weakness is the orchestra and a minimum of dress rehearsals.

Hits Revisited

Damn Yankee at second visit seemed a remarkable show in many ways to McClain, Journal American. There isn't a big, sure-pop ballad in the entire evening, they never drop the curtain on a big, smash finish, and they didn't give Gwen Verdon enough to do. But George Abbott did a miraculous job of casting, the slick arrangements and the star's uncanny sense of comedy in her dancing aid in making it a fine musical. Producers were informed by reviewer that Gwen Verdon is big enough to have a show written around her, a la Marilyn Miller.

Variety's Poll of NY Critics

Paul Muni, Inherit the Wind, and Kim Stanley, Bus Stop, were chosen by the NY Drama Critics in Variety's annual poll as giving the best performances by a leading player in a straight play. Walter Slezak, Fanny, and Gwen Verdon, Damn Yankee, were picked for best in musicals. Ed Begley, Inherit the Wind, and Patricia Jessel, Witness for the Prosecution, picked for best performances in supporting roles in straight plays. Herman Shumlin, Inherit the Wind, picked as best director, and Harold Arlen, House of Flowers, picked as best composer. Jerome Lawrence and Robert E Lee, Inherit the Wind, picked as most promising new playwrights. 16 NY critics participated in the poll.

Walter Hampden died June 10 at age 70 in Los Angeles' Cedars of Lebanon Hospital of a heart attack. The veteran actor of stage, screen and TV was last seen on Broadway in 1953 in The Crucible, and his last films included "Sabrina", "Strange Lady in Town", and "Silver Chalice". For 27 years he was president of The Players.

Plays

Tea and Sympathy and Lunatics and Lovers both will close June 25...Alex Cohen has withdrawn as producer of Cyrienne...The Happy Art Hill, a new comedy by Franz Spencer will be presented in late fall by Nancy Davids. Peter Lorre will star...Tiger at the Gates, the new Jean Giraudoux drama adapted by Christopher Fry, will be presented in January by Robert Joseph and Roger Stevens. Michael Redgrave, Leusen MacGrath of the London company will repeat their roles in NY...The Devil's A Stranger, which will debut Aug 22 at Boboth Beach, Delaware, will be moved to NY in early fall by Lewis Pierce.

Players

Pat Marshall replaces Janis Paige, The Pajama Game, and Mary Stanton replaces Patricia Marand...Richard Davalos, Van Heflin and Akin Tamiroff have leads in A View From Bridge...Boris Tamarin, Anastasia, has completed cast sketches in exhibit in Lyceum lobby...Christopher Hewitt, director of Almost Crazy, will also appear in Revue...James Shelton replaced Lee Krieger, Almost Crazy.

Summer Playhouses

Eli Wallach has taken leave of absence for July 17 production of Wedding Breakfast at Clinton, Conn...Albert Salmi, Bus Stop, and David Stewart, Anastasia, featured in June 19 White Barn, Conn experimental production of Tennessee Williams short story "3 Players of a Summer Game". The Better Mousetrap will be tried out at Bucks County, Pa. July 18 with Ronnie Graham and Neva Patterson...Snug-rats retitled Blue Denim and will open July 18 at Westport

OTHER BROADWAYS

Arena Stages, Washington, D.C. will close after current engagement of The Mousetrap. Director Zelda Fichandler will close the 247 seat house and start to raise funds to open a 600 seat house.

Porgy and Bess, sponsored by AMTA and US State Department, will open in Rio De Janeiro July 4. Group has played 24 cities in Europe and Africa...Oklahoma troupe will tour Italy starting July 7 in Florence after Paris "Salute to France" chores June 20-July 3...Deborah Kerr will appear with Old Vic Company for 5 months starting in July 1956 Teahouse of August Moon opened in Mexico City with Rosita Diaz Gimeno as Sakini.

Award Department

Tennessee Williams donated his Pulitzer Prize award of \$500 to Columbia University's School of Journalism...First Annual "Keloy Allen Award" presented to Sardi's...Lowell Manfull, Univ of Utah, and Joel Clinchhaga, Univ of Calif, won third annual National Collegiate Playwriting Contest sponsored by Samuel French, Inc.

Theatre Film Notes

Bob Hope will be starred in "King of Hearts" film to be made by Panama-Frank Productions..."Wedding Breakfast" will be filmed by United Artists with Shelley Winters and Eli Wallach featured...Monty Woolley joins cast of MGM "Kismet"...Danny Kaye will appear in new musical version of "Cyrano de Bergerac".

Theatre Record Notes

Decca has recorded original cast albums of Seventh Heaven and Ankles Aweigh in June...Variety reports that RCA Victor will probably win original cast rights to Rodgers and Hammerstein's Pipe Dream.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

Our Town will be presented as a musical Sept 19 on NBC TV...Sadler Welles Ballet Company will be presented on NBC-TV Dec 17.



GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

"METHOD" PANNED...The huge majority of so-called drama teachers and users of the "Stanislavsky Method" haven't any real idea of what it's all about, believes Burr, Playbill. If all of the last two decades' violent devotees of "The Method" were laid end to end, it would probably be an excellent thing for the modern theatre.

ADD BEST LISTS...Bus Stop was rated the best play of season by McClain, Journal American. While he picked Damn Yankee as best musical...If a ticket buyer cannot find something to his taste in the current NY shows he is not a theatre fan, notes Coleman, Mirror.

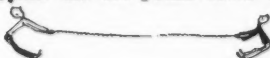
DRAMA MAIL BOX...Times article on summer theatre producers forgot the charming and talented apprentices who do the star-coddling for them, reminds a Times reader...Prize for honesty deserved by Barr-Bowden who closed All For One due to a "sudden drop in business", suggests a C.D. reader.

LEGIT DANCE RATED...Phoenix '55 dancing is highly expert, while choreography is at times expert and at other times practically non-existent, sums up Terry, Herald Tribune...Ankles Aweigh dances staged by Tony Charmoli is not up to the freshness of his work for TV Your Hit Parade, dance editor stated.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...TV writers do not write third acts, Kerr, Herald Tribune, stated in explaining the problems of a drama writer for TV...Seventh Heaven isn't soft-hearted, it's soft-headed, pans Nathan, Journal American. The tenderness is the tenderness of a baby's bottom, with none of its basic substantiality and merit.

GROUP 20 PLAYERS...Group 20 Players, which open their 3rd summer season at Wellesley College, Mass., may either accept a tempting off Broadway offer or choose from among four Broadway houses the Shuberts are willing to let them use, Watt, News, reports. Group will probably take the Off Broadway offer. Graduates of group include Nancy Wickwire, Fritz Weaver, Frederic Warriner, Jerome Kilty and Jack Landau.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Ray Walston is a musical comedy star who can't sing or dance and would rather play "Richard III", Paper, World Telegram & Sun, discovered...Walter Slezak admits that 25 years ago he was chosen one of the 10 handsomest men in the world, Fanny star told Herridge, Post, but then he found out about potato pancakes, beer and shortcake, and the 280 pound actor has never been the same since.



"Pros & Cons by T.N.K."

Teahouse of the August Moon with Eli Wallach and John Beal in the leads is a delight. Play, which is currently being presented around the world, is perfectly produced, even after so long a NY run. Wallach's immense enthusiasm as "Sakini" is a joy to watch. Except for several moments when comedy gets too loud and cartoonish, show is well worth seeing for first time for for second or third time.

"Irish Drama Festival" presentation of two W.B. Yeats plays, The Only Jealousy of Emer and The Player Queen, presented at YMHA and directed by Jenny Egan, provided an interesting, well done evening of Off Broadway theatre. Quality of production evidenced in fact that audience kept interest onstage inspite of fact that Marilyn Monroe was in the audience for the showcase performance.



OFF

BROADWAY

Circle in Square production of The King and The Duke closed... The Maids has extended run at Tempo Theatre through July 4... Brooklyn Arena Players to present Medea June 17-18 at WCA, 20 Third Av... Edward Sammis' The Line Pit presented June 10-12 at National Arts Club, 15 Grammeroy Park ... Lambs Club presented Caine Mutiny Court Martial June 12 with Vinton Hayworth in lead... Three by Two presented by Writers Group June 10-12 at Malin Studios... 3 actors from Inherit the Wind featured in workshop performance of Shaw's The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet and Richard Davidson's A Different Drum at 4th St Theatre June 12... Second production of Theatre 12 at Provincetown will be Turgenev A Month in the Country... Originals Only have switched theatre to Royal Playhouse, 62 E 4th and are presenting The Chair.

200 organizations arrange low-priced benefits at Greenwich Mews Theatre, Talbot, ANTA Newsletter, discovered. The groups make advance contributions. Theatre is part of the integral part of the religious program of the Village Presbyterian Church and the Brotherhood Synagogue, both of which meet at 141 West 13th St. Equity Off Broadway scale is paid actors and the average weekly gross is \$1000.

YIDDISH

THEATRE

Maurice Schwartz has been named to direct the re-organized Yiddish Art Theatre which will open the season at the Downtown National Oct 10 with L. Steister's The Shepard's King. Original group ran under Schwartz direction from 1919-1949. Four new plays in Yiddish will be presented each season.

THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

Ankles Aweigh original cast album (Decca) provides a score that is competent and which is an adequate vehicle for the performers, rates Variety mugg.

Sandhog unusual album (Vanguard) with composer Earl Robinson playing the piano and singing all the roles was mildly approved by Briggs, Times. Composer has a very pleasant singing voice and performs his songs in an agreeable fashion.



THEATRE

BOOK

COMMENTS

"Laurette" by Laurette Taylor's daughter Marguerite Courtney is both readable and interesting, okays Burr, Playbill. Through it is an unswerving, uncompromising honesty that gives the volume its unique value



THEATRE

TV

COMMENTS

Dinner at Eight production on CBS-TV Front Row Center series impressed 3 NY TV critics as spotty, mostly in the acting department. Gould, Times, thought show came off as warped over, not substantial theatre. Most of acting was mediocre, added Gross, News. Variety muggagreed that Pat O'Brien was badly miscast.

